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CLERK OF COURT
U.S. DISTRICT COURT
WD OF WI

Judge James Peterson
U.S. District Court
Western District of Wisconsin
120 North Henry Street Room 320
Madison WI 53703

Dear Judge Peterson

The bulk of this letter was written in January 2020 and then for who knows what reason was not sent.

Where to begin?

Enclosed is a copy of **The Body Keeps the Score** written by Dr. Bessel van der Kolk MD. While the book was published in 2014. I only became aware of it in 2021 hence why I have not made reference to it sooner. Part 2 of the book deals with how the Brain works and Part 3 deals with the impact of Trauma on the Brain. Note all the children who are at Lincoln Hills have been traumatized.

A review of the most recent report by the monitor surely is sobering. The State allowed an influx of some 30+ new individuals to be added to the population 1) KNOWING that there was NOT adequate staff to take care of the 39 individuals who were there and 2) KNOWING that there would be significant disruption as the children had to establish a new social order which would include physical challenges to establish that order. 3) KNOWING that a form of solitary confinement would be necessary to keep the children safe since they did not have the staff to make sure that they would be safe.

A review of the most recent report would also allow you to reopen the case to find out why the State 1) did what it did ie violate the RIGHTS of the children by not figuring out how to adequately staff Lincoln Hills (Note Wales sits empty and is much closer to a larger population that could staff the facility.) 2) To establish that all the children had suffered significant trauma even before they were sent to Lincoln Hills and the State/County had FAILED to address that trauma with effective therapy. Dr Kolk establishes very clearly that ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL and that there are many different factors that can influence the type of therapy that will be most effective to heal these children brain injuries.

It is clear that you are the only person who may care enough and be willing to acknowledge what Dr Lonnie Athens observed now 30 years ago that ALL violent individuals were FIRST traumatized Brutalized and then they all acted out and became Belligerent. How is it that the State of Wisconsin has not come to realize that children who are traumatized, act out and that acting out is BECAUSE of the injury to the BRAIN.

I pray that you will reopen the case based upon the NEEDS of the CHILDREN to get the THERAPY that they need to heal from the past traumas they have suffered and the current trauma they are experiencing at Lincoln Hill itself.

Yes what was the State to do with 30+ children who they had not planned for? Oh Stuff them at Lincoln Hills which was already inadequately staffed. It is only poor kids who will suffer so who cares. We need more bodies for our adult prisons!

Hopefully you reopen the case.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas Spellman", written in a cursive style.

Thomas Spellman

Written January 2020

Good morning Judge Peterson

This will sound preposterous but it is clear after a year of a new Political administration (Evers and Kaul) and yet another letter to the ACLU that no one will speak for the **interest** of the **children** at Lincoln Hills School for Boys. (see attached letter)

What are the **interest** of the **children** at Lincoln Hills that have been systematically ignored? There is no need to examine why or by whom those interest have been ignored only that they have been.

This is about the **brain**. We know that we do not have an established language to describe the brains "condition" after a person has been abused or traumatized. What we know is that the brain of a person who has been abused/traumatized, in a sustained way, is significantly different from the brain of a person who has not been abused/traumatized in a sustained way. Suffice it to say that the person has a **brain injury** which requires treatment just like any other part of the body that is injured and yet as we know we have no common language to adequately talk about a brain injury which has been caused by abuse/trauma. In addition to the brain injury we have not acknowledged the symptoms that let the person and others know that there is a brain injury. We do know that all injuries require some treatment if they are to heal and make the person whole again and so it is reasonable to assume that brain injuries require some treatment as well.

We know that the children who are at Lincoln Hills have **behaviors** that are not socially acceptable and those behaviors are a threat to others.

The question is why did the children who are at Lincoln Hills develop those behaviors? Are they just bad children or have their brains been injured? As we answer that question, we will begin to understand the true **interest** of the **children** who are at Lincoln Hills.

Now 30 years ago Lonnie Athens PhD, a sociologist, made an observation that a person who was abused/traumatized in a sustained way would develop socially unacceptable behaviors. He named those socially unacceptable behaviors - belligerency. He clearly established the behavioral process that a person goes through to become violent or to use violent behavior for some purpose.

Now 15 years ago two additional people made significant observations that have provided clear direction to know what is in the **interest** of the **children** at Lincoln Hills.

First is the work of Dr Amen MD who as a psychiatrist uses SPECT imaging to look at the brain. What is critical about his work is that a SPECT image shows where the blood flows to the brain and shows that a brain that has been injured by abuse/trauma will literally show holes in the brain compared to the brain of an individual who has not been injured. If you have not seen a SPECT image of the brain go to his web-site. The importance of this tool is that we can see how the abuse/trauma has impacted and changed the brain. His work also has demonstrated that the brain can heal itself and become more normal with care.

The second work is the ACE study completed by the health insurance company Kaiser – Permanent. The study was a questionnaire about a person health condition including 10 questions about the individual childhood experiences.

Those experience, which are weighted by the those who answered the questionnaire established that traumatic events in a person's life can result in a physical response by the body These have been called Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's)

What does all this have to do with the **interest** of any one child at Lincoln Hill School for Boys?

Before any of these children were adjudicated to Lincoln Hills, they had suffered any number of ACE's which caused significant brain injuries Those brain injuries were not treated as evidenced by the socially unacceptable behavior that got them to Lincoln Hills and which continues.

I will suggest to the court that there is more than ample testimony in this case to establish that the children at Lincoln Hills were abused and traumatized by the State of Wisconsin through what has been established in testimony before this very court We know that the abuse trauma injured the children brains and while there were no SPECT images made of the children's brains as they entered Lincoln Hills those images today would document for the court and the world to see what the State of Wisconsin did to these children.

This brings us to the reason to reopen the case because by now it should be clear beyond a doubt that the **true interest** of these **children** is to have help in the process of healing the brain injuries that they have suffered and to a lesser degree continue to suffer at the hands of the State of Wisconsin.

These children require LOVE if their brains are to grow and prosper and as we know there is no LOVE (or very little) at Lincoln Hills. People who are guards who fear those they are to guard so much that they would lock themselves into a secure room which as we know was not secure as the windows could be broken, The solution install stronger glass.

I have included the other letters to the court and to State officials and to the ACLU attorneys which includes specific suggestions of what needs to happen at Lincoln Hills that is in the interest of the children at Lincoln Hills School for Boys.

Please for the sake of the children do what is needed so their most basic human developmental needs are provided to them as they are provided to all those who are more fortunate.

There are 10 childhood traumas measured in the ACE score. For each question that you answered yes to below you will receive a point. The higher your ACE score the higher your risk of health, social, and emotional issues. Adults with a score of 4 or more points are at serious risk.

Prior to your 18th birthday:

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? or Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?
No___If Yes, enter 1 __
2. Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? or Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?
No___If Yes, enter 1 __
3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever... Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? or Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?
No___If Yes, enter 1 __
4. Did you often or very often feel that ... No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? or Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?
No___If Yes, enter 1 __
5. Did you often or very often feel that ... You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? or Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?
No___If Yes, enter 1 __

6. Were your parents ever separated or divorced?
No___If Yes, enter 1___
7. Was your mother or stepmother:
Often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her?
or Sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with
something hard? or Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or
threatened with a gun or knife?
No___If Yes, enter 1___
8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used
street drugs?
No___If Yes, enter 1___
9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member
attempt
suicide?
No___If Yes, enter 1___
10. Did a household member go to prison?
No___If Yes, enter 1___

October 27, 2019

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Good morning all

Just finished reading Patrick Marley's article in the MJS from Oct 19 and had no plans on responding until this morning at 3:00 am when yet again I realized that there is still no voice for the children!

In early October I read Molly Beck's article on the third Report of the Lincoln Hills by Teresa Abreu and in September I read Allison Dikanovic long article on New York's "Close to Home" program. While the program is operated in neighborhoods of New York what happens inside each house could surely be happening inside each home (cottage) at Lincoln Hills where the children live.

There does seem to be some conflict between the Report and the newspaper story. I will assume that the Report to the Court is the fair assessment and that the "incidents" that have occurred in August and September only involve a few of the children.

Teresa Abreu's September Report indicate that the DOC has provided more programming for the inmates than the prison "has ever had available to youth." Sort of like Christmas in July. There is no doubt that increased programing is good and it is good to have more choices.

Most unfortunately programing does not address the fundamental challenge facing many of the children at Lincoln Hills School for Boy and that is the abuse and trauma that they had experienced before being sent to Lincoln Hills and the abuse and trauma that they experience at the hands of the State of Wisconsin while at Lincoln Hills.

Who speaks for the children?

The children must have parents. Is that difficult to figure that out? Their brains are still growing and they need individuals who they see as parents. They need individuals who do not have keys and the power to write them up They need individuals who with time they can trust. Without trust there is no growth. What is so difficult to see. Maybe see your own children and then you will know what these children need.

As I pointed out in my letter of January 21, 2019 to each of you and it along with the previous letters to the Atty General are still needed today as they were needed long before I wrote those letters these children need healing for their brains that have been damage by the abuse and trauma that they have experienced.

Patrick noted that the DOC stated that "The inmates involved in the August incident were "held accountable for their actions with therapeutic and research-backed approaches, rather than with punitive punishments". This is to say the least a peculiar statement, as if in a session or two, and these individuals or in a group the abuse and trauma will be healed. The anger that was displayed in the incident reports has far deeper roots that a few sessions of "therapeutic and research-backed approaches".

This is yet another demonstration that DOC policy is to never address the underlying abuse and trauma that the children at Lincoln have and are suffering. There are no therapist listed as staff at Lincoln Hills Yes counselors and social workers but those folks have not been trained to deal with the trauma that these children have experienced and suffered.

Peace

Thomas Spellman

Cc WI Rep Tyler August
WI Senator Steve Nass